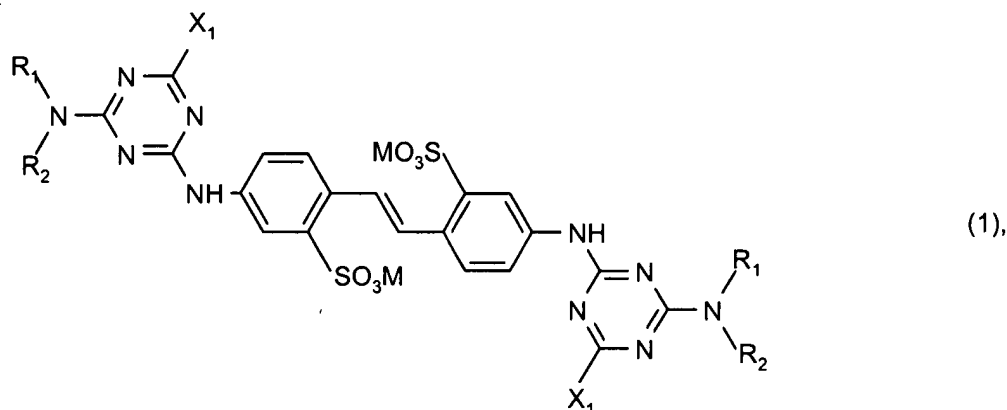


In the claims:

1. **(currently amended)** A whitening pigment comprising the reaction product of
- (a) a melamine-formaldehyde and/or a melamine-urea polycondensation product and
- (b) a water-soluble fluorescent whitening agent of the formula



wherein each of the two

$R_1$  group ~~[[s]]~~, independent of the other  $R_1$ , ~~represents is~~ a  $C_1$ - $C_6$ alkyl or  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl-O- $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl residue, which is substituted by one or two  $-CONH_2$ ,  $-CONHC_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl,  $-COOH$ ,  $-SO_2NH_2$ ,  $-SO_2NHC_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl or  $-NH_2$  groups, each of the two

$R_2$  group ~~[[s]]~~, independent of the other  $R_2$ , ~~represents is~~ hydrogen,  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl,  $C_2$ - $C_4$ hydroxyalkyl or  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkoxy $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl, or

$R_1$  and  $R_2$  together with the nitrogen atom complete a piperazine ring, each of the two

$X_1$  groups, independently, represent  $-OH$ ,  $-OC_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl,  $-O$ aryl or the group  $-NR_3R_4$ , wherein  $R_3$  and  $R_4$  each, independently, represent hydrogen,  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl,  $C_2$ - $C_4$ hydroxyalkyl,

$C_1$ - $C_4$ alkoxy $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl, a phenyl, phenyl mono- or disulphonic acid residue or,

$R_3$  and  $R_4$ , together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached, complete a morpholino, piperidino or pyrrolidino ring or, alternatively,

$X_1$  represents an amino acid residue from which a hydrogen atom has been abstracted from the amino group and

M is hydrogen, an alkaline or alkaline earth metal ion, ammonium, mono- di-, tri- or tetra-substituted  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkylammonium or  $C_2$ - $C_4$ hydroxyalkylammonium or mixtures thereof

wherein the reaction product has incorporated therein at least 16% by weight of component b.

2. **(original)** A whitening pigment according to claim 1, wherein the component (a) is a melamine-formaldehyde polycondensation product.
3. **(currently amended)** A whitening pigment according to claim 1, wherein, in the compound of formula (1), each of the two  $R_1$  groups are the same, each of the two  $R_2$  groups are the same, and each of the two  $X_1$  groups are the same.
4. **(previously presented)** A whitening pigment according to claim 1, wherein, in the compound of formula (1),  
 $R_1$  represents a  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl residue, which is substituted by one  $-CONH_2$  or  $-CONHC_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl group.
5. **(previously presented)** A whitening pigment according to claim 1, wherein, in the compound of formula (1),  
 $R_2$  represents hydrogen,  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl or  $C_2$ - $C_4$ hydroxyalkyl.
6. **(previously presented)** A whitening pigment according to claim 1, wherein, in the compound of formula (1),  
 $X_1$  represents the group  $-NR_3R_4$ , wherein  
 $R_3$  represents hydrogen,  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl,  $C_2$ - $C_4$ hydroxyalkyl,  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkoxy $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl, a phenyl, phenyl mono- or disulphonic acid residue,  
 $R_4$  represents hydrogen  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl or  $C_2$ - $C_4$ hydroxyalkyl or,  
 $R_3$  and  $R_4$ , together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached, complete a morpholino ring or, alternatively,  
 $X_1$  represents an amino acid residue from which a nitrogen atom has been abstracted from the amino group.
7. **(previously presented)** A whitening pigment according to claim 1, wherein, in the compound of formula (1), M represents hydrogen, sodium or potassium.
8. **(previously presented)** A process for the preparation of whitening pigment according to claim 1, whereby a melamine-formaldehyde or melamine-urea polycondensation product is reacted with a fluorescent whitening agent of formula (1) in aqueous medium, in the presence of mineral acid, and subsequently treated with base.

9. **(previously presented)** A method for the fluorescent whitening of paper which comprises applying to paper an effective whitening amount of a whitening pigment according to claim 1.

10. **(original)** A paper coating composition comprising, in addition to 0.01 to 10 parts by weight of the according to claim 1, per 100 parts of inorganic pigment,

- (i) from 3 to 25 parts by weight of binder and co-binder,
- (ii) 0 to 1 part by weight of rheology modifier and
- (iii) 0 to 2 parts by weight of wet-strength agent.

11. **(previously presented)** A method for the fluorescent whitening of paper which comprises applying to paper an effective whitening amount of a paper coating composition according to claim 10.

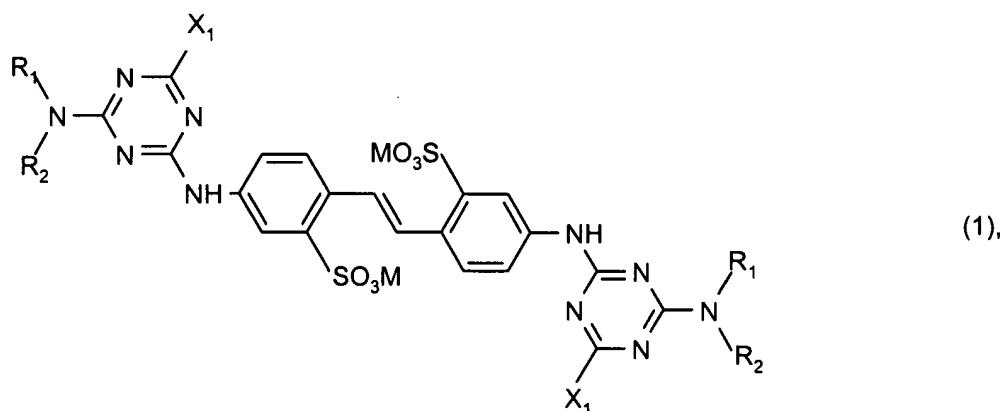
12. **(previously presented)** Paper which has been treated with a whitening pigment composition according to claim 1.

13. **(previously presented)** Paper which has been treated with a coating composition according to claim 10.

14. **(new)** A method for the fluorescent whitening of paper, which method comprises reacting in an aqueous media at a pH of 2 and at a temperature of between 50 and 90°C

(a) from 50 to 98% by weight, based on the combined weight of components a and b a melamine-formaldehyde and/or a melamine-urea polycondensation product and

(b) from 2 to 50% by weight, based on the combined weight of components a and b a water-soluble fluorescent whitening agent of the formula



wherein

each  $R_1$ , independent of the other  $R_1$ , is a  $C_1$ - $C_6$ alkyl or  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl-O- $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl residue, which is substituted by one or two -CONH<sub>2</sub>, -CONHC<sub>1</sub>- $C_4$ alkyl, -COOH, -SO<sub>2</sub>NH<sub>2</sub>, -SO<sub>2</sub>NHC<sub>1</sub>- $C_4$ alkyl or -NH<sub>2</sub> groups,

each  $R_2$ , independent of the other  $R_2$ , is hydrogen,  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl,  $C_2$ - $C_4$ hydroxyalkyl or  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkoxy $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl, or

$R_1$  and  $R_2$  together with the nitrogen atom complete a piperazine ring, each of the two

$X_1$  groups, independently, represent -OH, -OC<sub>1</sub>- $C_4$ alkyl, -Oaryl or the group -NR<sub>3</sub>R<sub>4</sub>, wherein  $R_3$  and  $R_4$  each, independently, represent hydrogen,  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl,  $C_2$ - $C_4$ hydroxyalkyl,

$C_1$ - $C_4$ alkoxy $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkyl, a phenyl, phenyl mono- or disulphonic acid residue or,

$R_3$  and  $R_4$ , together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached, complete a morpholino, piperidino or pyrrolidino ring or, alternatively,

$X_1$  represents an amino acid residue from which a hydrogen atom has been abstracted from the amino group and

M is hydrogen, an alkaline or alkaline earth metal ion, ammonium, mono- di-, tri- or tetra-substituted  $C_1$ - $C_4$ alkylammonium or  $C_2$ - $C_4$ hydroxyalkylammonium or mixtures thereof

to obtain a reaction product and applying an effective whitening amount of the reaction product to paper.

15. (new) A method according to claim 14, whereby a melamine-formaldehyde or melamine-urea polycondensation product is reacted with a fluorescent whitening agent of formula (1) in aqueous medium, in the presence of mineral acid, and subsequently treated with base.